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GERMANY'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA IN THE COALITION AGREEMENT OF 19th LEGISLATIVE PERIOD OF THE BUNDESTAG

***Abstract.** The paper contributes to contemporary debate on the issue of coalition governance in Germany's foreign policy. It explores to which extent the provisions of the current coalition agreement between Christian Democratic Union, Christian Social Union and the Social Democratic Party on Germany's policy toward Russian Federation were shaped by each of the sides.*

***Keywords:** Germany, foreign policy, coalition, Russia.*

Incumbent Germany's federal government of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) assumed office on March 14, 2018 [1]. *Coalition agreement between the CDU, CSU and SPD for the 19th legislative period of the Bundestag* provides framework for foreign political activities of current cabinet of the «grand coalition» under Angela Merkel [2].

Generally, the coalition agreement includes three major chapters, related to the foreign policy of Germany. Among them chapter 1 concerning the Federal Republic's policy in the European Union (EU), chapter 9 on Germany's migration policy, and chapter 12 named «Germany's responsibility for peace, liberty and security in the world». The last chapter includes a section on bilateral and regional cooperation in Europe and in the world. This part of the coalition agreement contains a separate paragraph related to the Federal Republic's foreign policy toward Russia.

However, yet in the introduction to the first chapter of the coalition agreement, related to Germany's policy in the EU, there is a reference to the Russian Federation. The parties that concluded the document, mentioned Russian policy in Europe as one of the challenges for the Union and as one of the reasons why the Federal Republic aims to contribute to strengthening of the EU [2, 6].

Mentioned chapter on Germany's responsibility in the world contains further points on foreign policy toward Russia. The paragraph devoted to the Federal Republic's engagement within the NATO, OSCE and the Council of Europe contains a reference on renewal of consultations in the NATO-Russia Council. The coalition parties welcome this step and consider the Council as an instrument of confidence building and reduction of conflict potential [2, 148]. However, a

reference on the NATO-Russia Council as an instrument of «strategic importance» and necessity to strengthen it can be found also in the coalition agreement, which the parties concluded in 2013 for the previous 18th legislative period of the Bundestag [3, 117].

Functioning of the NATO-Russia Council was suspended following the escalation of Russian aggression against Ukraine in April 2014 [4]. However, basing on the decision of North Atlantic Council taken during the summit in Warsaw in July 2016, consultation within the Council were revived [5]. Meanwhile, this point of the coalition agreement resonates with the provision of government programme of German Social Democratic Party issued before 2017 parliamentary election, stating that «Europe, the USA, Russia and China bear common responsibility for global peace» [6, 8]. On the other hand, the CDU / CSU considered Russia in its governmental programme to be a threat for European security due to its aggression against Ukraine and pleaded in favor of broadening of Germany's contribution to the EU's foreign and security policy capacities due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine [7, 55–56]. Hence, this point of the coalition agreement has most likely come from the SDP.

Further group of provisions on Germany's policy toward Russia is located in chapter 12 within the paragraph on bilateral and regional cooperation in Europe. This part of the paragraph is devoted specifically to Russia and sets up a framework of coalition's foreign policy toward the RF touching upon different policy aspects starting with security and economic issues and ending with civil society cooperation [2, 149–150]. This constitutes a continuation of practice from previous coalition agreement, which includes a separate subparagraph on diverse dimensions of Germany's policy toward Russia as well [3, 118].

At the beginning of the paragraph, the coalition partners reaffirm their commitment to uphold good relations with the RF. They consider the Federation to be Germany's «biggest European neighbor», with whom the FRG is willing to guarantee peace in Europe. This corresponds with the clause from the electoral programme of the SPD, stating, «Peace and security in Europe can be only achieved with Russia, and not without or against the RF» [6, 107].

On the other hand, the coalition parties claim violations of human rights in Russia to influence Germany's policy toward Moscow in a negative way. Appeals to the Russian side regarding observance of human rights do not constitute a novelty for normative based German foreign policy [8, 24]. Previous coalition agreement reflected Germany's concerns on the situation with human rights in the Russia, as the coalition parties appealed to official Moscow «to observe the standards of rule of law and democratic governance» according to its international obligations [3, 118]. The electoral programs of both sides do not include any provisions on this particular topic. However, transferring of the point on human rights situation in Russia by the CDU / CSU and SPD from one coalition agreement into another and even in a harsher version allows concluding that there is a consensus between them on this issue.

Likewise, the coalition parties transferred a point on further civil society cooperation with Russia, inter alia within the framework of the civil society forum

«Petersburg Dialogue» (*Ger. – Petersburger Dialog*) into a new agreement from that of 2013 [3, 118], although neither CDU / CSU block, nor the Social Democrats touched upon this issue in their electoral programs. For Germany, civil society cooperation remains a part of its «normative power» and belongs thus to the principles of its foreign policy. Therefore, it remained a priority stipulated in the coalition agreement even in spite of the situation with human rights in Russia as well as internal transformations in the «Petersburg Dialogue» [9, 26–28].

Furthermore, there is a consensus between the coalition parties on condemnation of Russian illegal annexation of Crimea and intervention in the Eastern Ukraine. This is also reflected in the subparagraph of the agreement related to the RF [2, 150]. Mentioned point matches with a reference in the CDU / CSU government programme, stating that Russian aggression challenged territorial integrity of Ukraine and endangered Germany's neighborhood in Europe [7, 55]. Meanwhile, the Social Democrats described Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea as a breach of international law and claimed this step together with «actions of Russian government in the Eastern Ukraine» to burden the relations between official Berlin and Moscow [6, 107]. Hence, it allows concluding that coalition parties agree both on negative influence of Russian aggression against Ukraine on German-Russian relations and on the fact, that Russia's interference in Ukraine «poses a threat to European order», as the sides actually note in the coalition agreement [2, 150].

However, the approaches to conflict resolution in Ukraine proposed by the coalition parties in light of parliamentary elections in September 2017 were slightly different. While the CDU / CSU urged Russia to adhere to the Minsk accords on a long-term basis [7, 64], the Social Democrats continued their rhetoric on the armed conflict in the Eastern Ukraine in the spirit of the *Ostpolitik* (*Ger. – Eastern policy*), created under Chancellor Willy Brandt in early 1970s [8, 21]. The approach on Russian interference in Donbass, the SPD suggested in its 2017 electoral programme was a rather cooperative one, basing on the principles of «détente, de-escalation and dialogue». Meanwhile, German Social Democrats expressed their readiness to contribute to revival of negotiations within the framework of «Minsk process» on conflict settlement in the Eastern Ukraine as well as to gradual removal of sanctions in case of «substantial progress by implementation of the Minsk accords». In addition, the SPD insisted on a necessity to create «an inclusive security architecture for the whole Europe» [6, 107]. Hence, the SPD demonstrated more readiness to engage the Federal Republic in dialogue with Russia than their former and current coalition partners from CDU / CSU block. Therefore, the points of the coalition agreement regarding conflict settlement in the Eastern Ukraine constitute rather a consolidated version of the positions of both sides. As, on the one hand, the coalition parties declared their readiness to engage into the process together with France and to facilitate the achievement of sustainable ceasefire along with retraction of heavy armaments from the contact line in Donbass. On the other hand, the sides urged both Ukraine and Russia to fulfil their obligations from the Minsk accords and agreed to discuss possible relief of sanctions against Russia in case of implementation of the accords [2, 150].

Therefore, the coalition agreement of the 19th legislative period of the Bundestag reflects the views of both coalition partners – the CDU / CSU and the Social Democratic Party – on Germany’s policy toward Russia in a rather balanced way. So far, actions of German federal government with regard to Russia confirm this suggestion, as there are no significant deviations from the principles stipulated in the agreement in the governmental policy. Disputes between the coalition partners or inside the parties were predominantly concentrated over options for dialogue with Russia, especially on Syrian or Iranian agenda, the extent of such dialogue and the necessity to put the issue of removal of the sanctions into bargaining package. Meanwhile, the ambitions on return to confidence-based relationship with Russia as well as creation of a common economic area from Lisbon to Vladivostok remain unimplemented.

Further studies on this topic may be conducted both on theoretical and empirical tracks. The first one may include, for instance, a study on coalition foreign policy making basing on the policy of incumbent German federal government toward Russia. Practical track studies may concern diverse aspects of current Germany’s foreign policy toward the RF starting with specifics of political dialogue or economic cooperation, and ending with regional or cultural contacts between the Federal Republic and Russia. However, the fact that the cadence of incumbent government finishes in autumn 2021 at the earliest can be considered as a possible limitation for the scholarly activities due to potential lack of empirical research material.

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ПОЛІТИЧНА АКТИВНІСТЬ КУРДСЬКОЇ ДІАСПОРИ У ФРН ЯК ФАКТОР АКТУАЛІЗАЦІЇ КУРДСЬКОЇ ПРОБЛЕМИ У МІЖНАРОДНИХ ВІДНОСИНАХ

***Анотація.** У тезах окреслено історію та умови формування курдської діаспори у Німеччині. Виділено головні напрями діяльності курдських ЗМІ та неурядових організацій і проаналізовано найпоширеніші форми курдської політичної активності у Німеччині.*

***Ключові слова:** діаспора, курди, Німеччина, політична активність.*

***Abstract.** The article describes the history and conditions of the formation of the Kurdish diaspora in Germany. The main areas of activity of the Kurdish media and non-governmental organizations are identified and the most common forms of Kurdish political activity in Germany are analyzed.*

***Keywords:** diaspora, the Kurds, Germany, political activity.*

Курдська проблема, що виникла внаслідок розпаду Османської імперії, є одним із невирішених питань міжнародних відносин ХХ–ХХІ ст., оскільки курди досі залишаються найбільшою недержавною нацією у світі. За різними підрахунками їхня чисельність складає 30–35 млн осіб [6] у понад 30 державах Європи, Північної Америки, Центральної Азії, Кавказу тощо. Незважаючи на те, що вони проживають у великій кількості країн, етнокультурне визнання їхньої самотності дає змогу розглядати створену ними мережу у категоріях діаспори.

Формування курдської діаспори в Європі розпочалося у 1960–1980-х рр. Це стало наслідком політики асиміляції та дискримінації за національною ознакою, яку проводили уряди держав компактного проживання курдів – Туреччини, Іраку, Ірану та Сирії. За даними Курдського інституту Парижа [6], внаслідок постійного збільшення кількості новоприбулих курдів їхня чисельність зросла до понад 1,7 млн осіб сьогодні у Європі. Серед основних причин міграції до Європи – пошук роботи, підвищення власного рівня життя та захист від переслідувань, політичних заворушень і війн в області Курдистана.

Близько половини всієї курдської діаспори Європи (0,85 млн) [6] сьогодні проживає у ФРН. Її формування розпочалося із двосторонніх договорів ФРН із Туреччиною про трудову міграцію курдів, а після державного перевороту в Туреччині 1980 р. міграція до Німеччини набула, окрім економічного, ще політичний характер через початок переслідувань курдів.